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Letter dated 16 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Following the statements made by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations in the Security Council during the public meeting on 14 January 2003 devoted to "children and armed conflict", on instructions from my Government I have the honour to address this letter to you in order to express our complete disagreement with the unfair and groundless accusations of the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/PV.4684 (Resumption 1)).

These allegations are further evidence of the bad faith of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of its lack of goodwill to meet its commitments and fulfil its obligations under the Pretoria Agreement of 30 July between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. These allegations, which are nothing more than an indoctrination attempt and a provocation directed at Rwanda, are aimed solely at diverting the attention of public opinion from the domestic political and military crisis, responsibility for which lies with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone.

Their inability to govern their own country, inability to find appropriate responses to the crises that are tearing their country apart and fear of confronting the realities of power-sharing are prompting the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to use a strategy of provocation in order to maintain the status quo. This strategy, of which the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is so fond, consists, first, of denying Rwanda's security concerns and conducting a campaign to indoctrinate public opinion, and then of encouraging the former Rwandan Army forces (ex-FAR) and the Interahamwe militiamen to attack our country in order to provoke further clashes and thus justify the lack of progress in the peace process, which is sought by those in power because they do not want to give up power or share it with other Congolese political forces.

The Government of Rwanda showed its will to participate in the restoration of peace and security in the Great Lakes region by signing the Pretoria Agreement with the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 30 July 2002. In accordance with that Agreement the Government of Rwanda conducted a total withdrawal of its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The last Rwandan soldier withdrew on 5 October 2002.

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The withdrawal took place in full view of the international community, represented by the diplomatic corps accredited in Kigali, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the third party, composed of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and South Africa, in its capacity as Chairperson of the African Union. The total withdrawal of our troops was confirmed by the third party in its statement of 24 October 2002.

We thus consider that the Government of Rwanda has fulfilled all its obligations relating to the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement.

Despite the respect for its commitments which the Government of Rwanda has always shown and continues to show with regard to its neighbours and the entire international community, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, encouraged by its backers, continues to drag its feet in accepting the logic of peace and good-neighbourliness. We thus regret the fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its allies, who have always asked us to withdraw our troops in exchange for the disarmament of the *génocidaires* present in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have not only failed to keep their promise, but continue falsely to accuse the Government of Rwanda of failing to withdraw all its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of "having sent 20,000 Hutu prisoners to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make up an armed force for the Governor of Nord-Kivu, Mr. Serufuli". This groundless statement was made by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Security Council during the same meeting.

Moreover, the statements of the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the effect that there are Rwandan businessmen in Nord-Kivu, refer to nothing that is abnormal or illegal. Any informed person is aware that social and commercial relations are maintained by the people living in the border zone between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda (Sud and Nord-Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cyangugu and Gisenyi on the Rwanda side). Such relations have always existed and seem bound to continue, especially as the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo lacks economic and social infrastructures.

The idea that Rwanda has maintained part of its troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and sent businessmen to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to exploit its resources is a complete invention and represents a well-established strategy used by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its backers as a manoeuvre to sabotage the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement concluded as a result of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

Bearing in mind the foregoing, we call on the Security Council:

(1) To put pressure on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to respect its commitments under the Pretoria Agreement signed on 30 July 2002 between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of Rwanda, specifically the provisions relating to the disarmament and demobilization of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe militiamen responsible for the 1994 genocide that took the lives of more than 1 million innocent Rwandans;

(2) To put pressure on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to end its strategy of provoking neighbouring countries in order to justify its appalling management of the domestic political crisis;

(3) To call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo fully to commit itself to the logic of peace and good-neighbourliness with its neighbours;

(4) To call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take on its responsibilities and confront harsh realities instead of constantly seeking external causes to excuse its failures;

(5) Finally, the Government of Rwanda is surprised at the fact that the Security Council has not taken into account the third party's statement of 24 October 2002 on the total withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for the text of this letter to be published and circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Anastase **Gasana**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative